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In Yemen, UN aid chief rallies support for relief efforts to prevent famine

27 February – The parties to the conflict in Yemen need to continue providing humanitarian access, and the international community needs to step up its funding for life-saving operations, the United Nations relief aid chief said today during his visit to the port city of Aden.

“I have come to Aden with the first humanitarian UN flight to lend support to the humanitarians who have been working in this city and in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015,” UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien told reporters there.

“Today, almost 19 million people in Yemen need humanitarian assistance. Seven million people don't know where their next meal is coming from and we now face a serious risk of famine,” he added.

Mr. O'Brien said the purpose of his visit was also to meet with senior Government officials to discuss how to prevent a possible famine and how to better protect the civilians that are caught in this conflict.

In Aden and the surrounding governorates, 3.1 million people need humanitarian assistance, two thirds of whom are in desperate need of food, he warned.



Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator visits IDP families living on the edge in Aden with nothing but the most rudimentary shelter Yemen.
Photo: OCHA Yemen



Yesterday, in meetings with President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr and other senior officials, the top UN aid official stressed the need for all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to allow for unimpeded and immediate full access by humanitarian partners to all of Yemen.

Given the urgency of the situation, they also discussed the need to facilitate commercial imports of food, fuel and medicine, through all ports of Yemen, and the resumption of commercial flights to all of Yemen, Mr. O'Brien said.

"Yesterday, I saw with my own eyes the destruction of the war and the impact on the people living in Aden," he said, noting that he was especially pleased to know that two babies – a boy and a girl – were born while he was at a maternity hospital. "They are Yemen's hope and future," he said.

In the Aden hub, more than 55 humanitarian organizations are working to meet pressing needs.

"We are here to help and provide neutral, impartial life-saving assistance to all people in need, regardless of where they are in Yemen," Mr. O'Brien said, stressing that there are no military solutions to this conflict and only peace can provide a lasting solution to this unfolding humanitarian crisis.

Refugees and migrants taking 'enormous risks' to reach Europe – UN agency

27 February – Increased border restrictions and lack of accessible legal ways to reach Europe have caused refugees and migrants to take more "diversified and dangerous journeys," such as relying on people-smugglers or using flimsy boats to cross rough seas, a new report by the United Nations refugee agency has revealed.

"This report clearly shows that the lack of accessible and safe pathways leads refugees and migrants to take enormous risks while attempting to reach Europe, including those simply trying to join family members," said Vincent Cochetel, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Director of Europe Bureau, in a news release announcing the report.

According to *Desperate Journeys*, issued today by UNHCR, the "closure" of the Western Balkan route and the European Union (EU)-Turkey Statement in March 2016, caused a drastic decrease in the number of people reaching Greece via the Eastern Mediterranean route.

However since then, the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy become the primary entry point to Europe and arrival trends in Italy show that the primary nationalities who crossed to Greece had not switched in significant numbers to the Central Mediterranean route.

In addition to drowning, migrants and refugees also risk of being kidnapped, held against their will for several days, physical and sexual abuse, torture and extortion by smugglers and criminal gangs at several points along key routes.

The Central Mediterranean route

The UN agency pointed out that in 2016, some 181,436 arrived in Italy by sea in need of international protection, and also victims of trafficking and migrants seeking better lives. About 90 per cent of them travelled by boat from Libya, and the top two nationalities of those arriving were Nigerians (21 per cent) and Eritreans (11 per cent).

This route is particularly dangerous and, in 2016, recorded more deaths at sea than ever before.



Asylum-seekers from Syria, including children, arrive on the shores of the island of Lesbos, in the North Aegean region of Greece. Photo: UNICEF/Alessio Romenzi

Furthermore, children making this journey are especially vulnerable, and the number of unaccompanied and separated children arriving is increasing. Last year more than 25,000 came, representing 14 per cent of all new arrivals in Italy.

“Their number more than doubled compared to the previous year,” said UNHCR.

The Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes

The report also showed that in the last part of 2016, more people reached the continent through the Western Mediterranean route, either by crossing the sea to Spain from Morocco and Algeria, or by entering the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta.

Similarly, people continued to leave Turkey along the Eastern Mediterranean route from April onwards, but in much smaller numbers. Most crossed the sea to Greece or Cyprus, others also crossed via land into the country or into Bulgaria.

Most who arrived by sea to Greece (87 per cent) came from the top ten refugee producing countries.

This was also the case for those who continued to move along the Western Balkans route: in Serbia, for instance, 82 per cent of those who arrived came from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and almost half are children – 20 per cent of those unaccompanied.

These numbers, however, numbers have reduced since April 2016, noted UNHCR.

Additionally, according to the study, tens of thousands of people also have been reportedly pushed back by border authorities in Europe, including in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Serbia, Spain, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with many cases of alleged violence and abuses in an apparent attempt to deter further entry attempts.

Germany: UN rights panel highlights racial profiling against people of African descent

27 February – People of African descent in Germany suffer racial discrimination, Afrophobia and racial profiling in their daily lives, but their situation remains largely invisible to the wider society, a United Nations expert panel said today at the end of its first official visit to the country.

“The repeated denial that racial profiling does not exist in Germany by police authorities and the lack of an independent complaint mechanism at federal and state level fosters impunity,” said Ricardo Sunga, who currently heads the expert panel, in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Established on 25 April 2002 by the then Commission on Human Rights, following the World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent is composed of five independent experts: Mr. Sunga (the Philippines), current Chair-Rapporteur; Michal Balcerzak (Poland); Mireille Fanon Mendes-France (France), Sabelo Gumedze (South Africa) and Ahmed Reid (Jamaica).

A Working Group delegation visited Berlin, Dessau, Dresden, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Hamburg from 20 to 27 February, to gain first-hand knowledge on discriminatory practices affecting people of African descent in Germany.

“There is a serious lack of ethnicity-based disaggregated data, and an incomplete understanding of history, which obscure



Chairperson of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent Ricardo Sunga. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

the magnitude of structural and institutional racism people of African descent face,” Mr. Sunga said, explaining that the Working Group believes that institutional racism and racist stereotyping by the criminal justice system has led to a failure to effectively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of racist violence, racial profiling and hate crimes against people of African descent.

During the eight-day mission, the human rights experts engaged with representatives of the German Federal and State authorities, representatives of national and provincial human rights institutions and civil society. The delegation welcomed ongoing efforts by the administration to address racial discrimination faced by people of African descent.

The Working group will present a report containing its findings and recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2017.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

Families report skyrocketing food prices, dire conditions in western Mosul – UN agency



Displaced families from east Mosul shelter at the nearby Hasansham U3 camp, while Iraqi Government Forces begin operations to retake control of the west of the city. Photo: UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

27 February – The United Nations food relief agency today said it is extremely concerned about the humanitarian situation facing more than 750,000 people living in dire conditions in the western sections of Iraq's Mosul city, where fighting is taking place between the Government forces and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorists.

“We are hearing from some families that food has drastically risen in price and is unaffordable. In extreme cases, people cannot access food at all,” said the World Food Programme's (WFP) Iraq Representative and Country Director, Sally Haydock, in a news release.

“We appeal to all parties to the conflict to facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to all Iraqis in need of assistance,” Ms. Haydock added, noting that WFP is monitoring the frontlines and remains ready to provide immediate food assistance as soon as

families can be reached safely.

Through telephone interviews, many distressed families said that food was unaffordable, while others said they could not access food at all.

“The situation is unbelievable,” reported a 46-year-old man from inside the city. “There is no food, no clean water, no gas for heating, no medicine and no services.”

So far, WFP has provided ready-to-eat food for over 6,000 people who have fled villages to the south of western Mosul. Most have made their way to Hamam Al Alil, Qayyarah Jeda'a and Haj Ali camps. WFP has enough food in stock to cover the immediate needs of 770,000 people who reside in western Mosul.

The military offensive to oust ISIL from Mosul began on 17 October 2016. The Government has since retaken eastern Mosul.

In related news, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that alongside its partners, it has provided legal assistance to help more than two and a half thousand Iraqis displaced as a result of the Mosul offensive receive new civil identity cards and other documents that were lost, damaged or destroyed as they fled their homes seeking safety.

As many as 49 per cent of displaced Iraqis interviewed by UNHCR protection partners were found to need help in getting new civil documentation, as many families lost documents or had their papers damaged as they fled conflict zones. Other families were told that birth and marriage documents, which had been issued when their areas were under the control of armed groups, were not legally recognized by the Iraqi Government and needed replacement.

“It took considerable time and effort to help displaced families with new documentation,” said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR's Representative in Iraq. “Our teams and partners have had to adopt some innovative methods and advocate tirelessly in order to get around some of the difficulties and lengthy bureaucratic requirements”, he said, citing the agency's ongoing efforts to assist thousands of people who have been in “legal limbo.”

Kosovo: Talks between Belgrade and Pristina are 'essential' to peace, UN envoy tells Security Council

27 February – There is no alternative to dialogue, the head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Kosovo today told the Security Council, citing the importance of high-level talks between Belgrade and Pristina, and calling for continued international engagement to maintain peace and stability in Kosovo and the wider Balkans region.

Addressing the Council, Zahir Tanin, the head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) said the resumption of high-level dialogue between Belgrade, and Pristina was an “essential step” to chart a path out of a deteriorating situation and to publicly reconfirm their commitment to work together.

“Stability in Kosovo, normalization of relations between Pristina and Belgrade, are part of the wider effort to improve stability in the Western Balkans,” said Mr. Tanin, who is also the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo.

He urged the 15 Council's members to “hold leaders to their words” to maintain “a sincere and consistent” commitment to dialogue, implement the agreements reached and avoid making statements which threaten the potential of progress to be made.

Mr. Tanin also highlighted also the international expectations of Pristina and Belgrade: non-confrontation, resolving issues through dialogue, and placing the objective improvement of the lives of people ahead of more limited and parochial calculations.

The statement comes as Belgrade is engaged in a political campaign for the presidential elections scheduled for April.

The senior UN official warned against allowing electoral politics to disrupt vital processes and progress: “Normalization of relations, reconciliation, and justice all belong to that broader horizon.”

Among other issues in his presentation to the Council, Mr. Tanin noted the importance of improving the social and economic situation in Kosovo. He underlined that “addressing unemployment, making progress in the rule of law and fighting corruption remain central for all people in Kosovo.”

At the very start of his speech, Mr. Tanin expressed his profound sadness at the passing of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, the Representative of Russia to the United Nations, who died suddenly last week.



Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), briefs the Security Council. Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Drought threatens 1.5 million Somalis; UN health agency scales up response



A resident of Rabaable village in Somalia fetches water with the help of her daughters. The village's well was recently rehabilitated by UNICEF. Photo: UNICEF Somalia/Sebastian Rich

27 February – Less than half of the people in Somalia have access to basic health services, the United Nations health agency today said, announcing that it is scaling up its response in the country amid a severe drought and worsening food crisis.

“Somalia is now at a critical point as a result of this drought and environmental hazards and lack of basic services,” said UN World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr. Mahmoud Fikri.

The UN agency said that it is providing “all possible support” to address the ongoing challenges. That includes sending in rapid response teams to areas of greatest threat. That includes sending medicines and medical supplies to health facilities in drought-affected areas.

Some 1.5 million people are believed to be affected by the severe drought and worsening food crisis. More than 400,000 of those people are malnourished children.

In addition, the drought conditions are causing epidemic-prone diseases to spread. These include cholera and measles. According to WHO, since early January, more than 6,000 cases of cholera have been reported, as well as more than 2,500 cases of suspected measles.

The UN has launched an appeal for \$825 million for the first half of 2017 for the pre-famine response. Of this, the health sector requires \$85 million, including \$10 million for the WHO.

UN health agency announces list of bacteria for which new antibiotics are urgently needed



Photo: WHO/Jim Holmes

27 February – The United Nations health agency today published its first-ever catalogue of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that pose the greatest threat to human health.

The list of priority pathogens consisting of 12 families of bacteria was drawn up to guide and promote research and development (R&D) of new antibiotics, as part of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s efforts to address growing global resistance to antimicrobial medicines.

“This list is a new tool to ensure R&D responds to urgent public health needs,” said Marie-Paule Kieny, WHO's Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Innovation in a news release.

“Antibiotic resistance is growing, and we are fast running out of treatment options. If we leave it to market forces alone, the new antibiotics we most urgently need are not going to be developed in time,” she warned.

The list highlights in particular the threat of 'gram-negative' bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics. These bacteria have built-in abilities to find new ways to resist treatment and can pass along genetic material that allows other bacteria to become drug-resistant as well.

The WHO list is divided into three categories according to the urgency of need for new antibiotics: critical, high and medium priority.

Priority 1: CRITICAL

- *Acinetobacter baumannii*, carbapenem-resistant
- *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, carbapenem-resistant
- *Enterobacteriaceae*, carbapenem-resistant, ESBL-producing

The most critical group of all includes multidrug resistant bacteria that pose a particular threat in hospitals, nursing homes, and among patients whose care requires devices such as ventilators and blood catheters. They include *Acinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas* and various Enterobacteriaceae, including *Klebsiella*, *E. coli*, *Serratia*, and *Proteus*. They can cause severe and often deadly infections such as bloodstream infections and pneumonia.

These bacteria have become resistant to a large number of antibiotics, including carbapenems and third generation cephalosporins – the best available antibiotics for treating multi-drug resistant bacteria.

G20 health experts will meet this week in Berlin. The list is intended to spur governments to put in place policies that incentivize basic science and advanced R&D by both publicly funded agencies and the private sector investing in new antibiotic discovery.

While more R&D is vital, alone, it cannot solve the problem. To address resistance, there must also be better prevention of infections and appropriate use of existing antibiotics in humans and animals, as well as rational use of any new antibiotics that are developed in future.

In Geneva, UN urges upholding human rights amid rising populism and extremism



The Human Rights Council chamber in Geneva. UN Photo/Elma Okic

27 February – Disregard for human rights is a “disease,” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today told the opening session of the UN Human Rights Council, urging Member States to uphold the rights of all people in the face of rising populism and extremism.

Addressing the top UN human rights body for the first time since becoming Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres appealed to world governments to speak up for human rights in an “impartial way.”

“Disregard for human rights is a disease, and it is a disease that is spreading – North, South, East and West,” the Secretary-General told the high-level segment of the 34th regular session of the Human Rights Council, alongside UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. “The Human Rights Council must be part of the cure.”

Having lived under the dictatorship of Portugal's António de Oliveira Salazar, Mr. Guterres explained that he was 24 before he knew democracy. Denying his compatriots their human rights had oppressed and impoverished many of them, resulting in a mass exodus, and also brought bloody civil wars to Portugal's former colonies in Africa.

Calling today's world “more dangerous, less predictable, more chaotic,” the Secretary-General called for making prevention a priority, tackling root causes of conflict and reacting early and more effectively to human rights violations.

He highlighted the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the treaties that derive from it, and urged the Council to be “fully engaged” on the issues that require their attention.

“We are increasingly seeing the perverse phenomenon of populism and extremism feeding off each other in a frenzy of growing racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance,” Mr. Guterres said.

“Minorities, indigenous communities and others face discriminations and abuse across the world,” he added, noting abuse targeting refugees and migrants, and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex (LGBTI).

Among other issues raised, Mr. Guterres also called for protection of the human rights defenders and of journalists who are “essential” to the checks and balances of any society.

In his address, UN High Commissioner Zeid denounced “reckless political profiteers” who threaten the multilateral system or intend to withdraw from parts of it.

“We have much to lose, so much to protect,” the UN High Commissioner said.

“Without a commitment to fundamental human rights, to the dignity and worth of the human person and to the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, our world will become chaos, misery and warfare,” he warned. “Of all the great post-war achievements, it is this assertion of the universality of rights in human rights law that may be the most noteworthy.”

Speaking directly to the political actors, Mr. Zeid said “the sirens of historical experience ought to ring clear” and pledged that “we will not sit idly by” in the face of violations.

“Our rights, the rights of others, the very future of our planet cannot, must not be thrown aside by these reckless political profiteers,” he added.

For his part, the President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thomson, called for greater dialogue and cooperation for peace among Governments, the UN system, civil society and the private sector.

He lauded the Human Rights Council as “essential” to bridging divides, and called for advancing “with common purpose” towards sustainable peace.

“Just as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes human rights as a cornerstone for sustainable development, so too does the concept of sustaining peace,” stated Mr. Thompson, urging the Council members to put forward their best ideas, well-honed skills and most determined will to defend the place of human rights in the drive to implement sustainable development and sustaining peace in today's challenging times.

UN rights expert calls on Myanmar authorities to protect Rohingya population

27 February – Concluding a four-day visit to parts of Bangladesh where she met with members of Myanmar's Rohingya community who fled the violence there following attacks on a border post in early October and the ensuing military operations, a United Nations expert called for urgent action by the Government of Myanmar to end the suffering of the Rohingya population in the country.

“The magnitude of violence that these families have witnessed and experienced is far more extensive than I had originally speculated,” highlighted Yanghee Lee, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

She recounted several allegations of horrific attacks including the slitting of some people's throats, indiscriminate shootings, houses



Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar
Yanghee Lee. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

being set alight with people tied up inside and very young children being thrown into the fire, as well as gang rapes and other sexual violence.

Earlier this month, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a flash report, based on its interviews with the people who fled Myanmar, in which it documented mass gang-rape, killings, including of babies and young children, brutal beatings, disappearances and other serious human rights violations by the country's security forces.

In addition to the alleged human rights violations occurring within the context of the security operations that followed the 9 October attacks, Ms. Lee also highlighted today how the Government of Myanmar appears to have taken, and continues to take, actions which discriminate against the Rohingya and make their lives even more difficult.

“I urge the Government of Myanmar to immediately cease the discrimination that the community continues to face, to act now to prevent any further serious rights violations and to conduct prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into those already alleged to have occurred,” said the UN rights expert.

“We all owe it to those I have met and their fellow community members to do everything in our power to ensure this is done and to give the Rohingya people reason to hope again,” she added.

During her mission to Bangladesh, Ms. Lee visited the capital Dhaka and the town of Cox's Bazar, located near its border with Myanmar, where many members of the Rohingya community had fled to. Ms. Lee will present her full report to the UN Human Rights Council on 13 March.

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Western Sahara: UN chief Guterres urges Morocco and Polisario Front to de-escalate tensions in buffer strip

25 February – Deeply concerned about increased tensions in the vicinity of Guerguerat in the buffer strip in southern Western Sahara between the Moroccan berm and the Mauritanian border, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today called on Morocco and Frente Polisario to “take all necessary steps” to avoid escalation.

According to a statement issued by UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, armed elements of both Morocco and Frente Polisario (Polisario Front) remain in close proximity to each other, a position they have been in since August 2016, monitored during daylight hours by the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

“The Secretary-General calls on both of the parties to exercise maximum restraint and take all necessary steps to avoid escalating tensions, be that through the actions of military or civilian actors,” the statement said, adding that Mr. Guterres also underlined that regular commercial traffic should not be obstructed and that no action should be taken, which may constitute a change to the status quo of the buffer strip.

Strongly urging the parties to unconditionally withdraw all armed elements from the buffer strip as soon as possible, to create an environment conducive to a resumption of the dialogue in the context of the political process led by the UN, the Spokesman said Mr. Guterres further called on the parties to adhere to their obligations under the ceasefire agreement and to respect both the letter and the spirit of it.



A Military Liaison Officer of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), looks through binoculars during a ceasefire monitoring patrol in Oum Dreyga, Western Sahara (June 2010). UN Photo/Martine Perret

Western Sahara is located on the north-west coast of Africa bordered by Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria. The colonial administration of Western Sahara by Spain ended in 1976. Fighting later broke out between Morocco and the Polisario Front. A ceasefire was signed in September 1991. MINURSO was deployed that year to monitor the ceasefire between the Government of Morocco and the Polisario Front and organizing, if the parties agree, a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara.

A revised settlement plan was proposed by the United Nations after seven years of diplomatic consultations was rejected by one of the parties in 2004. In approving the current phase of direct negotiations in 2007, the UN Security Council called for “a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political settlement which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.”

UN Security Council calls for immediate investigation into recent violence in DR Congo's Kasai region

25 February – The United Nations Security Council has strongly condemned the recent spate of violence in the south-central Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), calling on the Government to “immediately dispatch a credible and impartial investigation.”

In a press statement issued in New York yesterday evening, the Council expressed grave concern at the recent reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by local militia in that region, including unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers, and of killings of civilians by members of Congolese security forces, known as FARDC, “all of which might constitute war crimes under international law.”

Recalling that the DRC Government bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory, the Security Council urged the authorities to “constantly exercise maximum restraint and proportionate lawful use of force in its efforts to restore order.”

The Council also called on the Government to immediately dispatch an investigation and to bring to justice and hold accountable all those responsible. Welcoming the Government's announcement in this regard, the Council encouraged the UN Stabilization Mission in the country, known by its French acronym MONUSCO, “to provide support to the Congolese authorities, if requested, in the conduct of this investigation, developments in which they will follow very closely.”

MONUSCO was further urged to monitor and report on violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law and to update its contingency plans in this regard. In the longer-term, the Security Council encouraged the DRC Government to continue its efforts for the extension of State authority throughout the vast central African nation, ensuring credible governance with capable institutions, especially in the security sector, to prevent and deter violence.

As for the political situation in the country, the Security Council reaffirmed its strong support for the 31 December 2016 political agreement, “and its pursuit of peaceful, credible, free, fair and inclusive elections by December 2017, leading to a democratic transfer of power.”

In this context, the 15-nation body said it is “increasingly concerned” at the continuing lack of progress in the dialogue among the political stakeholders in DRC related to implementation modalities of the agreement. The Council expressed concern that, two months after the signing of the agreement, the appointment of a Prime Minister presented by the *Rassemblement* coalition, as well as the installation of a new transitional government and of the *Comité National de Suivi de l'Accord* (CNSA) have yet to take place.

As such, the Council stressed the need to maintain the political goodwill that led to the signing of the agreement in order to



UN peacekeeping mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) BMP armored vehicle on patrol. Photo: MONUSCO/Sylvain Liechti

avoid further insecurity in the DRC. Further, the Council called on all stakeholders in the DRC, including President Joseph Kabila, the presidential majority and the opposition, to redouble, in good faith, their efforts towards a speedy conclusion of the ongoing talks on the “*arrangements particuliers*” of the agreement, in order to urgently nominate a Prime Minister presented by the *Rassemblement*.

The Security Council reaffirmed the need for all parties to support and participate constructively in the mediation led by the *Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo* (CENCO), and recalled that full and timely implementation of the 31 December agreement, in accordance with the Congolese Constitution and in line with Council resolution 2277 (2016), is critical in upholding the legitimacy of the transitional institutions until elections.